

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea
April 26, 2023

President Biden. Good morning, good morning, good morning. What a beautiful day to invite great friends back to the White House. And welcome to the White House.

Today—today—we celebrate the ironclad alliance, the shared vision of our future, and the deep friendship that unites the Republic of Korea and the United States. President Yoon, Mrs. Kim, you were kind enough to host me in Seoul last year just 10 days after your inauguration. And Jill and I, we're honored to be able to return some of your hospitality with your second state visit to this administration.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the alliance between our two nations. It's an unbreakable bond, forged in bravery and the sacrifice of our people, sanctified by the blood of American and Korean troops who fought and defended liberty. And I'm proud we are joined today by veterans of the Korean war.

Those veterans are the reason we can stand here today, two vibrant and innovative democracies. We stand as strong, proud, and free because of them. And it's so meaningful, Mr. President, to visit the Korean War Veterans Memorial with you last night, to lay a wreath of remembrance, to fulfill a sacred obligation.

On September 1, 1950, Corporal Luther Story performed acts of bravery above and beyond all measure defending his brothers in arms on the Pusan Perimeter in Korea—in the Korean war. The last anyone saw of the corporal, he was wounded, fighting off a hostile assault to protect his company's withdrawal.

In 1951, his heroism was recognized with the Medal of Honor, but Corporal Story's body was never accounted for, until now. The Republic of Korea and the United States worked together to identify Corporal Story's remains among those buried as a Korean War Unknown in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Today, we can return him to his family and to his rest, with all the honors he deserves, because we never forget our heroes.

Mr. President, over the past seven decades, our alliance has grown stronger and more capable, and the cooperation between our people, our commitment to one another, has grown deeper across every aspect of our partnership.

Today, our economies are in the vanguard of technological development; our nations are powerhouses of innovation; and our people, united still by our democratic values, are taking on the challenges of the world, and we're taking them on together.

We're standing strong against Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine, advancing an Indo-Pacific region that is free and open, building secure and resilient supply chains and pioneering the clean-energy economy, investing together to ensure our future will be grounded in the values that we share, which have always—always—made us strong.

Mr. President, ours is a future filled with unimaginable opportunity and endless possibility. Nothing—nothing—is beyond our ability to reach when our nations and our people stand united. We have proven that time and again over the last 70 years.

As our troops say, who still proudly serve together in the R.O.K. to this day: We go together.

May the—we continue that refrain of the Republic of Korea and the United States for all the days ahead: We go together.

God bless our nations, and God protect our troops.

Thank you.

President Yoon. Mr. President, Dr. Biden, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Last evening my wife and I visited the Korean War Memorial on the National Mall with President Biden and Dr. Biden. There I saw the epitaph that reads, "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met."

Why did they sacrifice their lives for this faraway country and for the people they never met? That was for one noble cause: to defend freedom.

The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance was forged in blood as a result of our fight for freedom. The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is not a transactional relationship; it does not operate for the sake of mere interest. The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is an alliance of values, standing together to safeguard the universal value of freedom.

Thus, the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is a just alliance; it is a global alliance for the freedom, peace, and prosperity around the world. The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is an alliance in action moving toward the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, I came here to look back to the 70-year-long history of our alliance and, with President Biden, to design the vision for our shared future. I came here to celebrate and congratulate on the 70th anniversary of the alliance with pride, with joy, and with the American people.

President, Dr. Biden, I once again thank you for your kind invitation for my state visit. And I also thank the American people for your warm welcome and hospitality.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Yoon was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, the President referred to Kim Keon-hee, wife of President Yoon. President Yoon spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : South Korea, President Yoon.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Kim Keon-hee; Yoon Suk Yeol.

Subjects: Global supply chain disruptions, efforts to address; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; South Korea, defense relationship with U.S.; South Korea, President; South Korea, relations with U.S.; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300336.